

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5961

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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SUBJECT: ROK REACTION TO AFRICA DEVELOPMENTS

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1. SOUTH KOREAN INTEREST IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS, USUALLY NOT
VERY ACTIVE, HAS BEEN STIRRED RECENTLY BY THE COMBINATION OF
ANGOLA-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS AND RECENTLY ANNOUNCED NORTH KOREAN
ARMS SUPPLY PROGRAMS IN AFRICA. INTEREST IN AFRICA CURRENTLY IS
FOCUSED ON ANGOLA AND WHAT ALMOST ALL KOREAN OBSERVERS SEE AS
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WEAK AND WORRISOME U.S. REACTION THERETO. THE INDEPENDENT

CONSERVATIVE CHOSON ILBO COMMENTED EDITORIALY FEBRUARY 20 THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS EVIDENTLY NOW IN A POSITION TO CONTROL AFRICAN STATES AS IT PLEASES WHILE "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS TURNED OUT TO BE NOTHING BUT A SPECTATOR". THE INDEPENDENT MASS CIRCULATION HANGUK ILBO IN A FEBRUARY 21 EDITORIAL DEPLORED THE INDECISIVENESS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, SAYING THAT "THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAS BECOME TOO WEAK AND GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT IT IS DRIFTING IN A RAGING SEA." POINTING TO THE ANGOLAN CRISIS AS THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE, THE PAPER SAID U.S. FOREIGN POLICY HAS LOST WORLD TRUST, FAILED TO COMPETE WITH THE USSR AND LACKS CONSISTENCY, THUS GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF A LOSS OF U.S. LEADERSHIP ABILITY. THE PAPER PLACED THE BLAME FOR TURNING ANGOLA INTO A "SECOND INDO-CHINA" ON THE CONGRESS'S DENIAL OF AID REQUESTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

2. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SHINMUN AND THE MEIL KYONGJE SHINMUN CARRIED EDITORIALS ALSO DURING THE SAME PERIOD WHICH WERE LARGELY CONFINED TO A DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE OF EVENTS RELATING TO ANGOLA WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO COMMENT. MARCH 9 KUKJE SINBO EDITORIAL POINTED OUT DANGER OF EXPANSION OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN PRESENT RHODESIA-MOZAMBIQUE CRISIS AS USSR, NORTH KOREA AND CUBA MOVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE EDITORIALS, ROK PRESS MARCH 9 GAVE FRONT PAGE TREATMENT TO WASHINGTON DATELINED UPI STORY CITING "INTELLIGENCE SOURCES" AS SAYING NORTH KOREA HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN SUPPLYING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

3. PRESS AND EDITORIAL INTEREST IN ANGOLA HAS BEEN MIRRORRED TO SOME EXTENT BY CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE HAD WITH KOREANS IN OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE CAPACITIES. VICE FOREIGN MINISTER NO SIN-YONG HAS COMMENTED PRIVATELY TO US SEVERAL TIMES THAT US FAILURE TO RESPOND TO SOVIET CHALLENGE IN ANGOLA HAS CAST DOUBT OVER OUR ABILITY TO COME TO RESCUE OF COUNTRIES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS NO CHAE-PONG TOLD US RECENTLY THAT UNPREDICTABILITY OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ACTIONS AS DEMONSTRATED IN ANGOLA HAS GIVEN RISE TO DOUBTS AMONG KOREAN OPINION LEADERS ABOUT U.S. ABILITY TO MEET COMMITMENTS IN ROK.

4. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF AT MOFA MARCH 10 WEST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFRICA DIVISION CHIEF HYUN HUI-KANG ASKED IF THE USG WAS PREPARING TO RECOGNIZE THE MPLA BY AUTHORIZING SALE OF TWO BOEING AIRCRAFT AND RELEASE OF GULF ROYALTIES TO MPLA GOVERNMENT. EMBOFF REPLIED IN GENERAL VEIN THAT USG WAS NOT OPPOSED TO MPLA PER SE, BUT RATHER TO INTERVENTION OF EXTRA-CONTINENTAL POWERS IN AFRICA. HYUN ASKED WHAT PROCEDURE USG WOULD FOLLOW IF IT DECIDED TO RECOGNIZE MPLA--UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF RECOGNITION OR NEGOTIATED RECOGNITION. EMBOFF REPLIED HE WAS

NOT CERTAIN WASHINGTON THINKING HAD YET PROGRESSED TO THIS POINT.

ACTION REQUESTED: ANGOLA RECOGNITION DECISION IS CLEARLY ONE
ROKS MUST MAKE FOR SELVES BUT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND
ON ANGOLA SITUATION WHICH MIGHT ASSIST ROKG IN CONSIDERING
ITS OWN RECOGNITION POLICY VIS A VIS MPLA.
SNEIDER

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